United Nations CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/2

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: General
6 March 2018

Original: English

Working Group on Firearms
Vienna, 2–3 May 2018
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

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Background paper prepared by the Secretariat**

I. Introduction

1. Illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition is a global and transnational threat often linked to other forms and manifestations of organized crime, other serious crimes and terrorism. Illicit firearms are frequently a common denominator and a cross-cutting element in many crimes, from urban gang violence to transnational organized crime and terrorism. They serve as facilitators of violent crimes and as lucrative trafficking commodities that fuel armed conflicts, crime and insecurity, which in turn negatively impact development, safety and security.

2. Illicitly trafficked firearms and other trafficked commodities can often be smuggled through the same or similar networks and channels, using the same or similar modi operandi and even the same cargoes. Providers of related illicit services, such as forging documentation, transportation and laundering of illicit assets, can be shared and reused by criminal groups. Furthermore, the use of corrupt practices to facilitate and enable the illicit traffic can be a common denominator in different forms of organized crime, including firearms trafficking.

* CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/1

** The present report was submitted after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.

V.18-01262 (E) 130418 160418

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3. Organized criminal groups regularly protect their merchandise and use their resources and established practices to traffic various illicit commodities, including firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. Similarly, it would also appear that terrorist groups, besides resorting to improvised explosive devices, increasingly commit violent attacks using illicitly obtained firearms and commit other crimes to finance their activities, including illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and other illicit commodities.

4. The dividing line between firearms trafficking, on the one hand, and other forms of organized crime and terrorist activities on the other, is often not very clear because of the multiple transactions and exchanges of services among the different actors involved. This is the case, for example, when terrorist groups exploit the infrastructure of organized criminal groups to procure tools or profit from organized crime activities, including firearms trafficking, to generate funds and pursue their goals. Another such interconnection is when organized criminal groups, including drug trafficking organizations, procure illicitly trafficked firearms to protect their illicit merchandise or facilitate their trafficking activities.

5. The availability of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition to organized criminal and terrorist groups exponentially increases the destructive power of these groups and provides them with the necessary material and financial support to perpetuate their existence. Preventing these criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms is therefore one of the most pressing and urgent priorities for the international community. Member States have acknowledged and addressed their concerns in different intergovernmental forums, as described below.

6. In the outcome document of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", Member States were urged to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and money-laundering, and, in some cases, terrorism, including money-laundering in connection with the financing of terrorism.

7. The Security Council, in its resolutions 2322 (2016) and 2370 (2017), inter alia, referred to the links between terrorism and organized crime. In its resolution 2322 (2016), the Security Council expressed concern that terrorists benefit and continue to profit from transnational organized crime, including from the trafficking of arms, persons, drugs and artefacts, as well as from the illicit trade in natural resources and wildlife, and recognized the indispensable role of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice and that of fair and effective criminal justice systems as a fundamental basis of any strategy to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime. In its resolution 2370 (2017), the Security Council called upon States to take measures to counter these threats and recognized that the illicit transfer, theft from national stockpiles and illicit craft production can be a source of small arms and light weapons which can enable terrorist groups to considerably increase their armed capabilities. In the same resolution, the Council also called upon States to implement specific measures established under international arms instruments to contain the risk of terrorists acquiring those weapons.

8. The Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime has acknowledged the existence of links between firearms trafficking and other crimes. In its resolution 8/3, the Conference expressed its concern at the increased levels of harm and violence that transnational organized criminal groups generate in some regions of the world as a result of the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. It noted that reducing the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition was one of the major components of the efforts to reduce the violence that accompanies the activities of transnational organized criminal groups. In the same resolution, the Conference

requested the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to continue to promote international cooperation through regional and cross-regional workshops with the aim of investigating and prosecuting the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, including when related to terrorism and other crimes, such as urban crime committed by gangs, including for countries that are on relevant trafficking routes.

9. The Working Group on Firearms, at its fifth meeting, in 2017, also addressed the link between the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and terrorism, as well as other forms of organized crime. For instance, it recommended that UNODC collect and analyse relevant cases and good practices to investigate and prosecute firearms trafficking cases, including cases linked to terrorism and organized crime, and to produce a compendium of good practices and measures that helped States to efficiently prevent and address trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. The Working Group also recommended that UNODC facilitate the exchange of information, lessons learned and best practices regarding emerging threats and new forms of crimes, such as urban crime committed by gangs, arms trafficking through parcel services and the darknet, the assembly of firearms from spare parts and the modi operandi of traffickers, including cases linked to terrorism and organized crime.

10. Preventing organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms is also linked to reducing illicit arms flows as requested under target 16.4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16. Monitoring steps towards the achievement of this target requires comprehensive data collection efforts at the national and international levels as well as sufficient capacity to collect and record the required data.

II. Addressing the links between firearms trafficking, organized crime and terrorism through integrated approaches

11. Firearms play a crucial role not only in the genesis and commission of serious crimes, but also in their investigation and prosecution; as a central piece of evidence, firearms can "tell their story". Moreover, increased and tailored controls over the licit activities surrounding firearms, their parts and components and ammunition — including manufacturing, storage, use, trade, movements and disposal — can provide a first, fundamental barrier to prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from acquiring those items by reducing the risk of theft, diversion and trafficking.

12. Often, illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components, and other forms of serious and organized crime, as well as terrorism, are addressed in isolation, at both the policy and the operational levels, disregarding the links that exist between them. In practice, not enough attention is paid to the illicit origin of firearms and their links to other forms of crime. Law enforcement officials and prosecutors usually seize firearms that were used in the commission of crimes as mere instrumentalities of the main offence, only charging the alleged offender with illicit possession or similar offences, without addressing the possible underlying illicit trafficking of those arms. Hence, while the immediate goal is reached, namely to take a particular firearm out of circulation, the long-term aim of disrupting illicit firearms trafficking, dismantling criminal groups and networks and bringing their members to justice remains unattended.

13. This traditional way of addressing different threats in separate clusters, instead of through integrated and synergetic approaches, has so far prevented policymakers and practitioners from truly addressing the links that exist between the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and other forms of crime, including organized crime and terrorism. It has also prevented policymakers and practitioners from exploring what synergies and added value comprehensive firearms control regimes can provide to counter these interconnected threats, and from exploring to

what extent lessons learned and strategies that are applied to counter organized crime or terrorism can be also be applied specifically to counter illicit firearms trafficking.

14. A first step in effectively addressing this issue is to recognize and acknowledge the existence of the nexus between trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and other serious crimes, and to make the problem of firearms, their illicit manufacturing and trafficking a central and strategic piece of an integrated criminal justice response to these threats. One way of doing this is to consider how existing firearms control regimes can support efforts to prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and to explore the added value of integrating firearms control strategies and related criminal justice responses into wider strategies to counter transnational organized crime or terrorism.

15. The present background paper discusses practical measures that are explicitly provided for under the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and explores additional, interconnected and complementary measures that can help prevent organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms through illicit trafficking.

III. Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition through illicit trafficking

16. The Firearms Protocol and its parent Convention, while not specifically designed to prevent terrorists and criminal groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, contain a number of provisions that are particularly important in that regard. Those include legislative requirements and the criminalization of certain offences; preventive, security and regulatory control measures on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; a coherent law enforcement and criminal justice response to cases of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; and international cooperation and information exchange.

A. Assessing legislative requirements against the broader national context

17. Regardless of whether States parties follow a monist or dualist approach to international law with regard to the applicability of the legally binding Firearms Protocol and its parent Convention, all parties will need to interpret these instruments and incorporate the provisions into their respective domestic law in a way that fits the national context and legal regime. A sound legislative framework that transposes the Protocol and the Convention into domestic legislation constitutes the basis for a coherent criminal justice response to the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

18. In this respect, the legislative guides for the implementation of the Organized Crime Convention[1] and its Firearms Protocol[2] provide the primary guidance for fully understanding the legislative and operational requirements of the instruments. The *Model Law Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition*[3] can also provide help on how to transpose

[1] Available at www.unodc.org/cld/v3/sherloc/legislative-guide/index.html?lng=en.

[2] Available at www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/legislative_guides/05%20Legislative%20guide_Firearms%20Protocol.pdf.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.14.V.8.

the Protocol's provisions into domestic legislation, and offers, where needed, alternative drafting options that take into account different legal systems.

19. Developing synergies between existing international instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, can help States parties meet their international commitments under complementary instruments and ensure that their national laws address interconnected themes. In this regard, the UNODC *Comparative Analysis of Global Instruments on Firearms and Other Conventional Arms: Synergies for Implementation*[4] can be a valuable tool for States.

Complementary measures

20. A thorough analysis of the national legal framework and existing complementary legislation will be required to ensure internal coherence and avoid legal loopholes or contradictory norms. In this regard, a preliminary assessment of the nature and extent of the illicit firearms problem in the country and its possible links to other threats such as organized crime and terrorist groups can provide a better understanding for legislators and policymakers on how certain Convention and Protocol provisions could be adapted to respond to these specific needs. The results of the assessment can provide guidance on the type of measures within a firearms control regime that may need to be reinforced in order to prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

21. A broader assessment could also address underlying questions and aspects of a national arms control regime that can provide additional guidance to legislators and policymakers when transposing the Protocol and looking at ways to prevent criminals from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. These could include assessing the type of firearms problems that are predominant in the country; the legal conditions for manufacturing, acquisition, possession, ownership, transfers and disposal; and the specific threats that have been identified at each of these stages of the life cycle of firearms.

B. Criminalizing certain offences and sentencing criteria

22. The introduction of relevant criminal offences constitutes the core of a criminal justice response. Without criminal offences, neither investigation of the act nor prosecution and adjudication are compliant with the basic principle of the rule of law. The Firearms Protocol, in its article 5, requires States parties to adopt such legislative and other measures as may be necessary to establish three different groups of criminal offences linked to (a) illicit manufacturing, (b) illicit trafficking, and (c) tampering with firearm markings. The list of offences contained in the Protocol is not exhaustive and can be complemented, if States parties deem it necessary, by other offences that support enforcement of the Protocol.

23. In order to facilitate law enforcement actions and judiciary decisions against illicit firearms trafficking, States parties are required to criminalize illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition: thus, going beyond the criminalization only of illicit or unlicensed possession of a firearm, which is often applied as a "catch-all" offence to seize and forfeit firearms, without the further investigation of their origin.

24. The Organized Crime Convention, the Firearms Protocol and international instruments against terrorism do not provide for specific criminal offences that directly link firearms to terrorism or organized crime for the purpose of committing or supporting the commission of organized crime or terrorist activities, or to finance them. Thus, in order to prevent organized crime and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and to prevent and combat

[4] www.unodc.org/documents/firearms-protocol/ComparativeAnalysisPaper.pdf

firearms trafficking, with full respect to the rule of law, States parties may consider adopting stricter measures than those provided for in the Convention and the Protocol.

25. While the Protocol stipulates that the offence of illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition must be established as a criminal offence — not as a mere administrative or civil offence — it does not guide States parties on the potential scope of applicable sanctions. According to the Organized Crime Convention, offences established in accordance with it and its Protocols should be liable to sanctions that take into account the gravity of the respective offences (art. 11, para. 1). The gravity of the offences should also be considered during the judicial process. One example is when considering whether or not to grant the possibility of early release or parole. Another example concerns the possibility of establishing longer statutes of limitations for the commencement of proceedings for complex and transnational offences (art. 11, paras. 4 and 5 of the Convention).

26. In order to deter firearms traffickers from contributing to terrorist attacks or organized criminal activities, States parties could, where the legal regime allows, define such conduct either as specific aggravating circumstances to the offence of illicit firearms manufacturing or trafficking, or as autonomous offences. Both could be justified by the fact that terrorist attacks and organized criminal activities pose an even greater threat to society when committed with firearms.

27. Legislators may also consider introducing additional optional offences aimed at reinforcing the implementation of preventive measures under the Firearms Protocol, which, if not properly applied and enforced, may facilitate access to firearms for criminal groups and terrorists, or make it less difficult. Such measures address the failure to keep records or the intentional destruction of records, the illicit reactivation of firearms and illicit brokering, among other things.

C. Preventive, security and regulatory control measures on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition

28. Considering that organized crime and terrorism are among the most serious threats to international peace and security, preventing organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition is of utmost importance. It is not always clear whether perpetrators of the above-mentioned crimes are themselves engaged in illicit firearms trafficking or are acquiring them domestically, for example from thriving black markets, by looting national stockpiles or benefiting from corrupt individuals with legal access to firearms and ammunition. Such information is necessary to inform and help contextualize the appropriate prevention strategy. Below are some practical measures, under the Protocol, that can be tailored to respond to the specific threats.

1. National licences and authorization systems for manufacturing and other firearms-related activities

29. The manufacturing or assembly of firearms, their parts and components or ammunition without a licence or authorization from a competent authority of the State where the manufacture or assembly takes place, is considered under the Firearms Protocol to be a form of "illicit manufacturing" and shall be established as a self-standing criminal offence by States parties.

30. The Protocol does not explicitly require the establishment of a national authority or institution related to firearms. However, it clearly establishes the principle that certain activities involving firearms, such as manufacturing, sale, acquisition, transfer, deactivation and disposal, inter alia, need to be subject to prior control by a public entity and to the issuance of a valid licence, permit or authorization. While the establishment of the criteria and conditions for the issuance or suspension of such licences or permits falls under the purview of each State party, it is important to note that these controls often represent the first filter that can help prevent criminals from

acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. These measures could be tailored to the specific needs and conditions of a country.

2. Transfer licensing or authorization systems, security measures and brokering

31. The Protocol provides for general requirements for export, import and transit licensing or authorization systems (art. 10). It further requests parties to consider establishing brokering regulation systems (art. 15). It is a reciprocal system requiring States to provide authorizations to one another before permitting shipments of firearms to leave, arrive or transit across their territory and enables law enforcement to track the legal movement of shipments to prevent theft and diversion. These standards are intended to help ensure a level of transparency to assist States parties to better target illicit transactions. Comprehensively transposed and strictly applied, such transfer control systems help minimize the risk that organized criminal and terrorist groups might gain access and directly engage in illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

32. However, there is still a risk of the system being undermined in particular by criminals and terrorists that falsify required documents or divert the consignment during the legal transfer. Article 11, subparagraph (a), of the Protocol requires States parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the security of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition at the time of manufacture, import, export and transit through their territory. The Protocol also requires States parties to consider establishing a system for regulating the activities of those who engage in brokering (art. 15). According to the Protocol, such a system could include, among others things: (a) requiring registration of brokers operating within their territory; (b) requiring licensing or authorization of brokering; or (c) requiring disclosure on import and export licences or authorizations, or accompanying documents, of the names and locations of brokers involved in the transaction. The Arms Trade Treaty contains similar provisions as mandatory measures.

Complementary measures

33. Issuing transfer and brokering licences with more scrutiny and exploring connections of licence applicants with organized criminal and terrorist groups as part of a security vetting process can be complementary measures.

3. Marking, record-keeping and stockpile management

34. There are cases of members of organized criminal and terrorist groups acquiring domestically diverted firearms, parts and components and ammunition. Once those items are in the hands of a criminal or terrorist group, they might circulate within the established network regardless of national borders, and will ultimately be trafficked. Therefore, implementing preventive and security measures such as marking and record-keeping, as well as stockpile management of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition at the domestic level, helps reduce the risk of organized criminal and terrorist groups acquiring firearms through illicit trafficking.

35. Marking and record-keeping are two prerequisites that allow States parties to identify and trace firearms with a view to determining their point of diversion, as well as trafficking patterns and routes. The latter is particularly important as this information can inform policy and operational decisions taken with a view to countering the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, as well as preventing organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring those items.

36. The Protocol further provides for the establishment and maintenance of record-keeping systems for firearms, their parts and components and ammunition that should contain at least the information required for the tracing of such items (article 7 of the Protocol). Keeping comprehensive records, including of seized, found and surrendered firearms, is a precondition for tracing their origins.

Complementary measures

37. To facilitate the identification of trafficking patterns and flows, States parties could widen the scope of information recorded on firearms by adding information on the ballistic fingerprint produced by each individual firearm. This information can facilitate the tracing exercise in case markings on the firearms have been permanently erased and can help to link one firearm to multiple crime scenes through a ballistic matching exercise.

38. One integral aspect of secure stockpile management during the above-mentioned periods of the firearms life cycle is a comprehensive staff vetting and selection exercise, as individuals with legal access to firearms, their parts and components and ammunition perform duties that require a high level of integrity and conformity with existing standards and regulations. All individuals involved in the legal transfer of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition could therefore be required to undergo a security vetting before the commencement of service and at regular intervals during service that aims at detecting associations with criminal or terrorist elements.

4. Deactivation

39. Firearms that have been previously deactivated constitute another commodity at risk of being illicitly trafficked and used by criminal and terrorist groups.

40. Deactivation is a permanent and irreversible process through which a firearm is rendered permanently inoperable. This is not to be confused with the temporary deactivation or neutralization, which is a reversible process often applied to firearms while on transfers or stored in deposits, used in expositions or brought to courts or other public places.

41. The Firearms Protocol requires States parties that do not recognize a deactivated firearm as a firearm in accordance with its domestic law, to take the necessary measures, including the establishment of specific offences if appropriate, to prevent the illicit reactivation of deactivated firearms (art. 9).

42. Deactivation procedures should be subject to strict controls and should follow three general safeguards:

(a) All essential parts of a deactivated firearm are to be rendered permanently inoperable and incapable of removal, replacement or modification in a manner that would permit the firearm to be reactivated in any way;

(b) Arrangements are to be made for deactivation measures to be verified, where appropriate, by a competent authority to ensure that the modifications made to a firearm render it permanently inoperable;

(c) Verification by a competent authority is to include a certificate or record attesting to the deactivation of the firearm or a clearly visible mark to that effect stamped on the firearm.

43. In practice, however, deactivation standards largely depend on the country and do not always hinder a reactivation. Lack of harmonization on whether deactivated firearms are still considered to be firearms and therefore fall under the same regulatory and legal regime, as well as differences in the level of deactivation standards, create loopholes and legal gaps that organized criminal and terrorist groups can exploit.

Complementary measures

44. In order to prevent organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring deactivated firearms that can be reactivated, States parties should, if they decide not to recognize deactivated firearms as firearms, harmonize their deactivation standards and ensure that all essential parts of a deactivated firearm are to be rendered permanently inoperable.

45. As described above, States parties may also consider introducing specific criminal offences to enforce the prohibition of reactivation of a deactivated firearm.

5. Collection and destruction of firearms

46. Another important element of comprehensive strategies aimed at reducing illicit arms flows and preventing firearms, their parts and components and ammunition from falling into the hands of criminal and terrorist groups is by reducing the number of arms that are in circulation and that are at risk of being stolen or lost.

47. Regular collection and destruction of State-held surplus weapons forms part of broader national disarmament initiatives. Moreover, many countries implement regular or periodic arms surrender programmes to reduce the number of arms in civilian hands. There are many and very diverse examples of surrender programmes that have different approaches, mechanisms and incentives. These programmes may be anonymous or require full identification of the persons that deliver the arms, are based on temporary amnesty laws or are part of permanent disarmament campaigns, provide monetary or other material incentives, or none, and all have a high crime-prevention value.

48. Collection and destruction campaigns often involve local communities and civil society organizations, which support and participate to different degrees in such campaigns, and exercise oversight over the collection process. This measure contributes to enhancing transparency and building stronger levels of confidence between the State and the communities that decide to give up their firearms and rely on the State to defend and protect them if necessary.

D. Law enforcement and a coherent criminal justice response to cases of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition

49. On both the preventive and the detection/investigation sides, law enforcement measures are particularly important in stopping concrete cases of illicit arms trafficking, thereby potentially preventing organized criminal groups from acquiring firearms, and gathering information that will facilitate tailored responses.

50. In this regard, the provisions of the Organized Crime Convention that apply to the Firearms Protocol, mutatis mutandis, become particularly important. Those include, among other things, special investigative techniques (article 20 of the Convention), measures to enhance cooperation with law enforcement authorities (art. 26) and law enforcement cooperation (art. 27).

1. Enhancing the intelligence picture of illicit firearms and their criminal context

51. It is important to know where criminal or terrorist organizations have acquired their illicit firearms. According to the 2017 *Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment* of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), investigations into the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Paris in 2015 and Brussels in 2016 uncovered that some of the perpetrators of those attacks had been involved in different types of serious and organized crime. That involvement included the trafficking of illicit drugs, as well as personal contacts with criminal groups involved in the trafficking of firearms and the production of fraudulent documents.[5]

52. Understanding the local illicit market for firearms and the groups involved, through enhanced intelligence analysis, can provide important insights that can help address the links to organized crime or terrorism. It may also reveal the extent to which those groups are directly involved in the illicit traffic, or make use of

[5] Europol, *Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2017*, p. 56.

established networks or contacts with other criminals that are specialized in black market commodities but are not part of their organizations.

2. Strengthening capacity for detection and seizure of firearms

53. The Firearms Protocol requires States parties to increase the effectiveness of import, export and transit controls, including, where appropriate, border controls, and of police and customs transborder cooperation (art. 11, subpara. (b)). The Protocol further requires States parties to enable seizures and confiscations of illicitly manufactured or trafficked firearms (art. 6).

54. According to the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*,[6] a large amount of the illicit trafficking seems to take place in smaller quantities through land border crossings, in vehicles, cars and larger buses, including (to a lesser extent) through parcel services. Larger seizures were less frequent. However, because they are easy to conceal and transport, and difficult to track across often porous borders, seizures at border crossings remain challenging and are limited in number.

55. Strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officials to detect and seize firearms, especially at land border crossings, is of crucial importance to reduce illicit flows and dismantle responsible criminal networks. This should also include the capacity to respond to the challenges posed by new technologies, such as trafficking via the Internet or the darknet, and the use of parcel service delivery. Specialized training in searches and seizures, on vehicles, containers and other vectors, is also important and necessary, given the complexity of the illicit trade.

56. Identifying suitable risk indicators and providing customs and border officials with the necessary equipment and specialized training on detecting, identification and tracing of these arms are other important measures that should be considered.

Complementary measures

57. Another way to enhance the capacity of detection and seizure by law enforcement authorities is through the enhanced involvement of local communities, as well as the design of appropriate reporting and information mechanisms.

58. Local communities know best who in their community is engaged in firearms trafficking and where such items can be found; thus by working with communities, law enforcement authorities can receive valuable information that can contribute to increasing the detection and seizure of illicit firearms. Such mechanisms, however, depend on high levels of confidence and trust between the parties involved and require adequate and secure communication channels which guarantee anonymity. Voluntary collection and destruction campaigns with civil society oversight of the Government's implementation of its international commitments in this field can complement these initiatives.

59. When considering similar community-based approaches to encourage public reporting on illicit firearms, States parties may wish to consider broader confidence-building mechanisms to enhance the levels of trust between their law enforcement authorities and the communities, as well as adequate structures to preserve confidentiality and security of the informants.

3. Integrating firearms investigations into broader investigative schemes

60. Reducing illicit financial and arms flows and combating all forms of organized crime is a precondition for attaining sustainable development and durable peace (see also target 16.4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16). Countering the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition is essential to preventing organized crime and terrorist groups from

[6] The study is available in English at www.unodc.org/documents/firearms-protocol/UNODC_Study_on_Firearms_WEB.pdf. The accompanying country fact sheets are available in English at www.unodc.org/documents/firearms-protocol/Country_Factsheet_WEB.pdf.

acquiring those items. It is also part of a broader strategy aimed at (a) detecting and disrupting illicit (arms) trafficking flows, (b) dismantling the criminal groups and trafficking networks, (c) depriving them of their illicit assets, and (d) preventing them from reconstituting abroad by bringing their leaders to justice.

61. Firearms and cartridges seized at crime scenes can serve as valuable evidence, both to identify the perpetrator and potentially to link different crimes through ballistic matching. The latter is particularly helpful in identifying firearms trafficking routes and patterns and could give valuable insight into the movements and supply chains of criminal and terrorist groups.

62. In practice, firearms-related investigations often do not receive appropriate attention, aside from the first level of action, which is that of seizing the firearm and taking the basic evidence needed for establishing the seized weapon as accessory to the primary offence. Law enforcement action often focuses on the main crime, e.g., a drug trafficking case or an act of terrorism, treating the firearm as a mere instrumentality of the main offence. Often, parallel investigations on firearms trafficking are not initiated. The cumulative effect of this is a major gap in knowledge on firearms trafficking trends and illicit firearms leakages and sources.

Complementary measures

63. A more proactive investigative approach comprising systematic investigations on the origin of firearms that are seized in the context of organized crime and terrorism can, in the medium and long term, help to gather the information and intelligence required to ultimately prevent organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms.

64. Such a proactive approach can be supported by standard operating procedures which dictate the initiation of a parallel investigation, where appropriate. This would help to ensure that investigations of potential cases of firearms trafficking are systematically initiated, and, at the same time, that the cross-cutting nature of the firearms element in organized crime and terrorism is attended to in a coordinated and centralized manner.

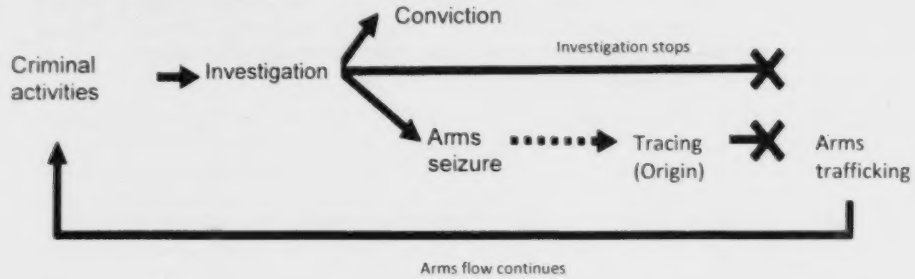
65. Specialized firearms hubs which centralize the firearms expertise required to conduct full-fledged investigations into firearms-related criminality and into firearms trafficking cases in particular, with the necessary investigative powers, can support national institutions in this task.

66. The figure below shows two different investigative approaches and how illicit arms flows can be stopped on the basis of a proactive investigation approach that includes systematic tracing of the seized firearms.

Figure
Investigative approaches

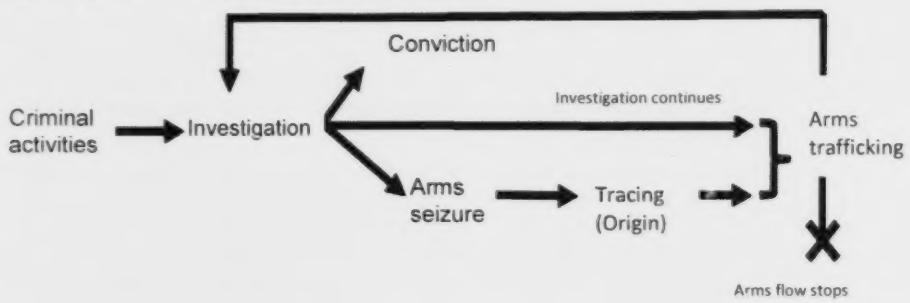
Scenario A

Often encountered investigative approach on firearms seized in context of other crime



Scenario B

Proactive investigation approach on firearms seized in context of other crime



4. Investigative approaches

67. Moreover, the proactive investigation approach could be embedded in a comprehensive strategy on organized crime and terrorism which looks at both the firearm and the individual who uses it. Linking the information on both aspects can help to better understand and counter the phenomenon of organized criminal and terrorist groups acquiring firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

68. Specialized units in charge of organized crime or terrorism would greatly benefit from training to understand the linkages to firearms trafficking and conduct parallel investigations on that crime.

69. In application of article 11, subparagraph (b), of the Firearms Protocol, law enforcement authorities and, in particular, customs officers could apply specialized profiling and risk assessment indicators to support early warning mechanisms to detect firearms trafficking linked to possible organized criminal and terrorist acts.

5. Using and applying special investigative techniques, and joint investigative teams to firearms investigations

70. Integrating firearms investigations into broader investigating schemes means looking at the broader picture and its ultimate goal, which is to disrupt the traffic and the related crimes, dismantle the criminal organization, and identify and bring the perpetrators and their leaders to justice.

71. To this end, States parties may wish to encourage the use, at both the national and international levels, of broader and more complex investigative techniques tailored to the specific context, as appropriate.

Complementary measures

72. Some investigative techniques may require prior legislative adaptation, such as controlled deliveries, which in the case of firearms, may also require additional coordination and cooperation arrangements. Undercover operations, use of informants, and other methods, such as electronic surveillance, as indicated in the Organized Crime Convention (arts. 20 and 26), could equally be applied, subject to the national legal framework.

E. International cooperation and information exchange

73. As trafficking in firearms, their parts and components is by definition transnational in nature, and organized crime and terrorism, too, are very often transnational crimes that involve two or more countries, international cooperation and information exchange at the regional and international levels is key to preventing organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms. Those actions constitute fundamental pillars of any serious effort to counter organized crime, including illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.

74. The Firearms Protocol and its parent Convention provide a vast cooperation framework and both require the promotion, facilitation and strengthening of cooperation among States parties, in the case of the Firearms Protocol, on preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, as their main purpose.

1. Information exchange

75. Article 12 of the Protocol requires the exchange of information on various firearms-related topics, including the parties authorized to be involved in firearms transfers, organized criminal groups known to be or suspected of being involved in firearms trafficking and the modus operandi employed by such groups, relevant legislative experiences and practices and measures, and relevant scientific and technological information useful to law enforcement authorities. In addition, article 28 of the Convention requires States parties to consider analysing trends in organized crime in their territories and to develop and share analytical expertise concerning organized criminal activities.

76. Useful information exchange could include the following:

(a) Updates shared among States on best practices in the areas of record-keeping, marking and deactivation of firearms;

(b) Guidelines on efficient measures for seizure, confiscation, management and disposal of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition;

(c) Statistical data on firearms losses, thefts and seizures in each country;

(d) Levels of arms flows, internally and externally; patterns of both legal and illegal acquisition; and the impact on society;

(e) Best types of public awareness campaigns in each country.

77. Such gathering and exchange of information can help States to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and its modi operandi, and of the groups or individuals involved in these activities.

Complementary measures

78. To provide better knowledge and an evidence base for policy and operational decisions, such information can be complemented by information on terrorist groups, and, in the case of individuals authorized to be involved in firearms transfers, be complemented by information on which applicants did not receive the requested licences, linked to a security vetting of such applicants.

2. Tracing

79. The Protocol further requires States parties to cooperate in tracing. Article 12, paragraph 4, of the Protocol requires States parties to cooperate in the tracing of firearms that may have been illicitly manufactured or trafficked, and this cooperation must include the provision of prompt responses to requests for assistance in tracing such firearms.

80. Tracing of firearms is central to any criminal investigation involving firearms. The purpose of tracing firearms and ammunition is to identify the point at which legally held firearms and ammunition have been diverted into the illicit market, which would include information about the last person or entity that was known to hold legal authority over the traced item. This, in turn, can help in identifying those responsible for the diversion and hold them accountable, thereby preventing future diversions from the same sources.

Complementary measures

81. Linked to the proactive investigation approach described above, tracing firearms, their parts and components and ammunition could be part of a set of standardized measures to be taken when those items are seized at a crime scene that is linked to organized criminality and terrorism.

3. Promote and use existing mechanisms for international judicial and law enforcement cooperation

82. Finally, encouraging and promoting the broadest international cooperation in criminal matters implies making use of existing instruments, such as the Organized Crime Convention, and applying them, mutatis mutandis, to firearms trafficking cases.

Complementary measures

83. In some cases, in order to be able to apply the existing tools and instruments, States parties may have to enact and, where appropriate, review and update their extradition and mutual legal assistance laws in order to ensure the inclusion of firearms-related offences and their links to other organized crime and terrorism-related offences, consistently with their international obligations.

IV. Practical measures to monitor the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

84. Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals requests Member States as follows: "by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime". With this target, the international community acknowledges the devastating effect of illicit arms flows on development. Global monitoring of steps towards the achievement of this target is undertaken using the indicator 16.4.2, which was developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. The indicator was adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 and is contained in the resolution on the work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 71/313). Indicator 16.4.2 reads as follows: "Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments". UNODC has been designated as co-custodian for this indicator, together with the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat.

85. To facilitate the implementation of the global indicator framework, all indicators are classified by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators into three tiers based on their level of methodological development and the availability of data at the global level. Indicator 16.4.2 is classified under tier III,

which means that "no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested".

86. Among the proposed methodologies to collect relevant data under indicator 16.4.2, is the revised UNODC illicit arms flows questionnaire.[7] UNODC initiated the updating of the methodology used for the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* in 2016, pursuant to the mandate contained in Conference resolution 8/3. That resolution requires UNODC to continue to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative information and suitably disaggregated data on trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, taking into account the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015* and target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to disseminate its findings on a regular basis, and to this end, to revise and enhance its methodology in cooperation with relevant organizations.

87. Following an informal expert group meeting in September 2016 and a round of informal consultations with selected firearms and statistical experts in March 2017, UNODC launched a pilot test exercise of the revised illicit arms flows questionnaire. Feedback received through this exercise, as well as during three regional meetings on firearms data collection and analysis, was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire.[8] At the time of preparing this report, it is estimated that the official data collection exercise will be launched in April 2018.

88. The revised illicit arms flows questionnaire contains quantitative and qualitative questions on the amount, type, condition, geographical and criminal context, tracing, as well as trafficking routes, trends and modalities of seized firearms. The questionnaire also addresses, where necessary, found and surrendered firearms, for reporting progress on Sustainable Development Goal target indicator 16.4.2. Additionally, where deemed useful for the identification and monitoring of illicit arms flows, the questionnaire seeks information on seized parts and components and ammunition.

89. The UNODC data collection methodology on illicit firearms, their parts and components and ammunition provides the information necessary for reporting on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, it seeks to provide a comprehensive and global overview on trends and patterns in illicit firearms trafficking, thereby increasing knowledge and understanding of the largely unknown scope of trafficking and expanding the evidence base for policy and operational decisions to counter illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, in line with Conference resolution 8/3.

90. UNODC complements its global data collection exercise by providing Member States, upon request, with support for their national data collection and analysis efforts, as well as for using the data as a basis for policy and operational decisions with a view to countering the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and its links to organized crime and terrorism.

V. Conclusions

91. Owing to the interconnectedness of the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition on the one hand, and other forms of organized crime and terrorism on the other, preventing organized criminal and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms becomes increasingly relevant.

92. The Firearms Protocol and its parent Convention constitute sound legal frameworks that help to address this issue at the policy, legislative and operational levels. However, countering the phenomenon in a comprehensive manner may require

[7] CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/4

[8] Please refer to CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3 for more information on the pilot test exercise, as well as on the regional meetings in support of data collection and analysis.

additional and complementary measures that are based on the implementation of the above-mentioned legal framework but provide for a stricter security and control framework.

93. In acknowledgment of the cross-cutting nature of the firearms element in different forms of crime, including organized crime and terrorism, Member States may wish to redouble their efforts in detecting, investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition by systematically initiating parallel investigations on potential trafficking cases.

94. Monitoring steps towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal target 16.4 requires comprehensive data collection efforts at the national and international levels, as well as appropriate capacities to collect and record the required data. UNODC places the information collected, via its illicit arms flows questionnaire, at the disposal of the United Nations Statistical Division for Sustainable Development Goal reporting purposes. UNODC stands ready to support Member States, upon request, in their national data collection and analysis efforts and in using the data as a basis for policy and operational decisions with a view to countering the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and its links to organized crime and terrorism.

V.18-01262

United Nations CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: General
21 February 2018

Original: English

Working Group on Firearms
Vienna, 2 and 3 May 2018
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote ratification and implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 8/3, entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime requested the Secretariat to inform the Working Group on Firearms about (a) the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to assist the Conference in promoting and supporting the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, (b) coordination with other relevant international and regional organizations, (c) best practices in the areas of training and capacity-building, and (d) awareness-raising strategies to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

2. In the same resolution, the Conference noted with appreciation the assistance provided by UNODC to States, upon request, through its Global Programme on Firearms, and requested that it continue to assist requesting States in their efforts to ratify, accept, approve of or accede to and implement the Firearms Protocol.

* CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/1.

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3. The present background paper was prepared by the Secretariat to inform the Working Group on Firearms about the activities of UNODC to promote and support the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol, pursuant to relevant mandates provided by the Conference and the Working Group. The paper covers the period between the last Working Group meeting, held from 8 to 10 May 2017, and the end of April 2018.

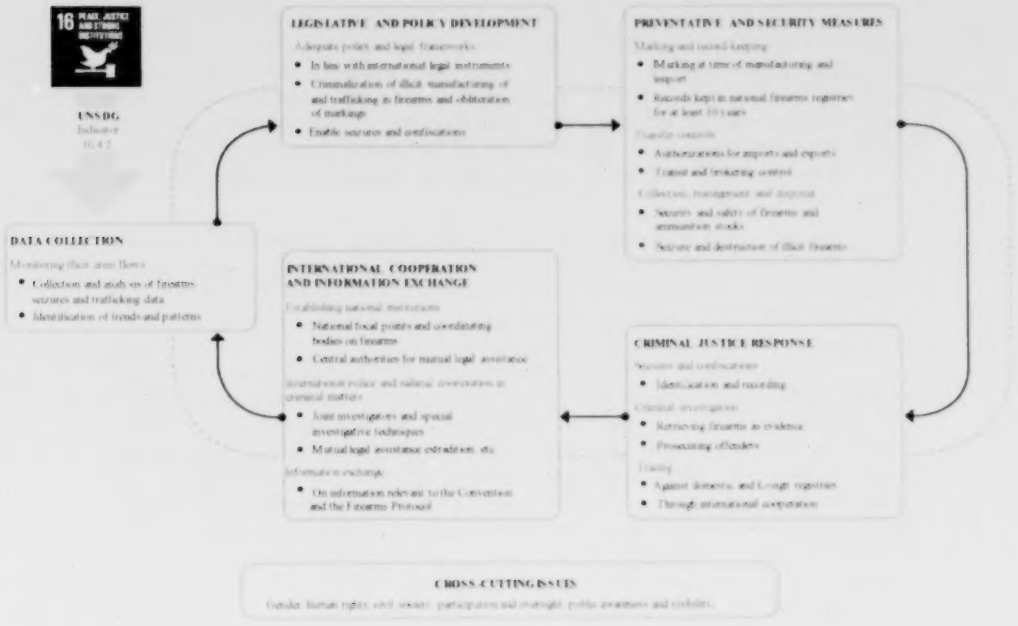
II. Integrated approach of the Global Programme on Firearms to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms

4. The work of UNODC to counter illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms under the Global Programme on Firearms follows an integrated approach that is based on five major pillars. Each pillar specifically covers one of five interrelated areas of action needed to address the different aspects of the problem, as follows: (a) enhancing policy and normative development through awareness-raising, legislative assistance and specialized tools to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol; (b) provision of technical support for the implementation of preventive and security measures to prevent the illicit manufacturing and theft of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (c) strengthening criminal justice responses to detect, investigate and prosecute the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (d) fostering and promoting international cooperation and information exchange to address the transnational dimension of trafficking in illicit firearms and related issues; (e) mapping and monitoring flows of illicit firearms by means of global data collection and analysis to enhance the intelligence picture of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context.

5. The Programme's integrated approach builds on the premise that only the joint interaction of all five pillars can provide a meaningful framework for successful action. The approach is complemented by a number of cross-cutting elements, such as awareness-raising and visibility, gender, human rights and civil society participation and oversight, which are integrated into the Programme's activities.

6. Together, the five pillars also contribute to and support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) and Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), and support the global monitoring of its target 16.4 (by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime).

Figure I
Integrated five-pillar approach of the Global Programme on Firearms


UNSDG
Indicator
16.4.2
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
In line with international legal instruments
Criminalization of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and obliteration of markings
Enable seizures and confiscations
PREVENTATIVE AND SECURITY MEASURES
Marking at time of manufacturing and import
Records kept in national firearms registries for at least 10 years
Authorizations for imports and exports
Transit and brokering control
Security and safety of firearms and ammunition stocks
Seizure and destruction of illicit firearms
DATA COLLECTION
Collection and analysis of firearms seizures and trafficking data
Identification of trends and patterns
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE
National focal points and coordinating bodies on firearms
Central authorities for mutual legal assistance
Joint investigations and special investigative techniques
Mutual legal assistance extradition, etc.
On information relevant to the Convention and the Firearms Protocol
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE
Identification and recording
Retrieving firearms as evidence
Prosecuting offenders
Against domestic and foreign registries
Through international cooperation
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

III. Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol

7. Pursuant to its mandate, the Global Programme on Firearms has continued to promote and support adherence to and transposition and implementation of the Firearms Protocol. It has also delivered technical assistance, promoted international cooperation and the exchange of good practices and information among practitioners, and enhanced national and international data collection, research and analysis on firearms and illicit trafficking in firearms.

8. Through donor support,[1] the Global Programme on Firearms was able to implement over 50 activities during the reporting period, including by engaging with more than 10 countries in Africa, the Western Balkan region and Latin America in the provision of direct technical support and cooperation, and supported over 45 countries through regional activities, reaching a total of more than 500 people.

A. Normative and policy development: support to intergovernmental bodies and processes related to firearms

1. Participation in and support to the work of intergovernmental bodies

9. Pursuant to Conference resolution 8/3, UNODC has strongly encouraged the participation of national experts and competent authorities in the meetings of the Working Group on Firearms. Moreover, through donor contributions, UNODC was

[1] During the reporting period, activities of the Global Programme on Firearms were funded through donations from the European Union, Germany, Italy and Sweden, as well as from Denmark and Japan (through the UNODC Sahel Programme) and Panama (through its national project).

able to support the participation of practitioners from 10 francophone countries of Africa at the last meeting of the Working Group.[2]

10. Pursuant to the recommendations made by the Working Group at its meeting held in Vienna from 8 to 10 May 2017 (see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/4), UNODC participated in and contributed to the work of other intergovernmental bodies and mechanisms with a view to maintaining and enhancing cooperation and coordination between the secretariats and bodies of relevant international and regional instruments and mechanisms (recommendation 23) and to facilitating synergies between the Firearms Protocol and other global and regional instruments (recommendation 6), as detailed below.

11. At the invitation of the Mexican chairmanship of the Organization of American States (OAS), representatives of UNODC participated in the forty-seventh regular session of OAS General Assembly, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 19 to 21 June 2017, and contributed to the high-level discussions on multidimensional security. At the invitation of the Chair of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2017, a representative of UNODC also participated as a panellist in the discussions on the Arms Trade Treaty and the Sustainable Development Goals, and held bilateral meetings with the Chair of the Conference and the Secretary of the Arms Trade Treaty, with a view to exploring and fostering cooperation between UNODC and the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty. Moreover, representatives of UNODC attended the seventy-second session of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (General Assembly First Committee), held in New York from 2 October to 2 November 2017, and the first session of the General Assembly of the African Police Cooperation Organization, held in Algiers from 14 to 16 May 2017.

12. Furthermore, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in and contributed to the preparatory process for the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument through a series of thematic symposiums organized jointly by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the European Union and the Small Arms Survey. The expert symposiums were aimed at fostering discussion and exchange among experts on several substantive topics, including tracing and stockpile management in conflict and post-conflict situations (held in New York on 23 and 24 October 2017); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the gender aspects of control of small arms and light weapons (held in New York on 25 and 26 October 2017); manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons and resulting challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument (held in Brussels on 20 and 21 November 2017); and synergies between the Programme of Action on Small Arms and other instruments, including the Firearms Protocol (held in Geneva from 22 to 24 November 2017).

2. Activities to increase knowledge and raise awareness

13. UNODC has continued to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Firearms Protocol and to increase the visibility of work in the field of firearms control through specialized side events, seminars and think-tank meetings, and engagement with civil society organizations, among other activities.

14. On the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna from 13 to 17 March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms and the CRIMJUST project, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNODC in partnership with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and Transparency International, held a side event on the topic "Links between illicit drug

[2] Enabled by a financial contribution from the Government of France, experts from the following countries attended the meeting: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Togo.

trafficking and trafficking in illicit firearms: towards an integrated approach", at which UNODC and Member States shared their experiences. During the event, experts from Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria provided concrete examples of the interconnectedness of illicit flows of drugs and firearms.[3]

15. The Global Programme on Firearms organized two side events on the margins of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Vienna from 22 to 26 May 2017. The first was organized in cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, RAND Europe and the Global Programme on Cybercrime and was entitled "Web-based arms trafficking: investigating the illegal trade of firearms through the hidden web". The event served as a platform to share research on trafficking in firearms on the deep web and as an opportunity for representatives of the European Police Office (Europol) to elaborate on their experience in the matter. UNODC provided an analysis of the continued usefulness and applicability of the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol to cases of trafficking in firearms on the deep web. The second side event, organized in cooperation with the European Commission and the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, was entitled "From data to action: using firearms data to tailor policies, enhance operational capacities and foster international cooperation to combat firearms trafficking". At the event, representatives of the Government of Panama, the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats and UNODC focused on practical examples of using firearms data for monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. A representative of UNODC also participated as a panellist in the meeting of the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures organized by the Government of Germany and the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the margins of the seventy-second session of the First Committee. The meeting addressed the issue of curbing arms flows from a field perspective: the case of Africa.

17. UNODC also participated in an informal expert meeting organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on exploring synergies in reporting under multilateral conventional arms treaties and instruments, held in Geneva on 6 December 2017. During the meeting, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms presented the Programme's new data collection tool on firearms, and briefed participants about current efforts to update its information-gathering tools in support of the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol.

18. Moreover, representatives of UNODC participated in a meeting organized by Wilton Park on implementing target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals: increasing detection and reporting of illicit small arms and light weapons: common challenges and shared solutions, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 to 28 February 2018. UNODC also contributed to a workshop organized by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion on lessons learned from arms control efforts in fragile and post-conflict contexts, held in Berlin on 26 and 27 February 2018. The workshop focused on experiences with cross-border law enforcement cooperation in the fight against trafficking and experiences with community-based, civilian disarmament efforts.

19. With a view to improving the sharing of information with Member States, UNODC organized an information briefing for Member States on the achievements and priorities of the Global Programme on Firearms in Vienna on 23 January 2018. The event was attended by more than 70 government representatives from 55 Member States.

[3] Even though this activity took place prior to the indicated reporting period, it has been included in the present background paper, as it was not reflected in the previous paper on the work of UNODC in support of the Working Group on Firearms (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/3).

20. As a means to reach a wider, more diverse audience, the Global Programme on Firearms, with support from the Advocacy Section of UNODC, reviewed and updated its communication strategy to include a more diversified range of tools and approaches, such as the use of the Internet and social media. In 2017, more than 21,400 people visited the Global Programme's web page.

Priority areas for further action

21. UNODC will continue to organize activities and events aimed at increasing stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of firearms and related issues and the Office's work in that regard.

3. Status of adherence to the Firearms Protocol

22. In September 2017, Fiji acceded to the Firearms Protocol, bringing the total number of parties to 115.

Figure II
Ratification rate of the Firearms Protocol, by year (status as at 1 January 2018)

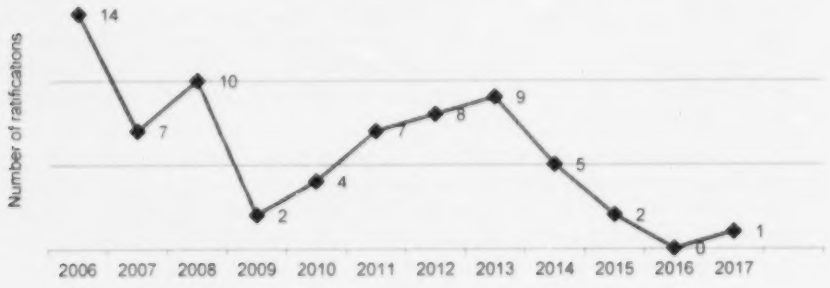
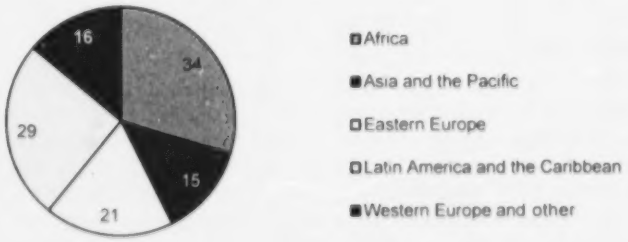


Figure III
Number of States parties that have ratified the Firearms Protocol, by region (status as of January 2018)



23. During the reporting period, UNODC provided legislative advice to Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chad, Germany, Japan, the Niger and Sri Lanka to support their possible accession to and ratification of the Firearms Protocol. As a result, several countries informed UNODC that they were in the process of completing their internal accession procedure.

Priority areas for further action

24. In order to continue promoting knowledge of and adherence to the Firearms Protocol, UNODC will seek to continue raising awareness of the Protocol among non-parties and regions with low ratification rates through, inter alia, regional and national pre-ratification support workshops, subject to the availability of funds for that purpose.

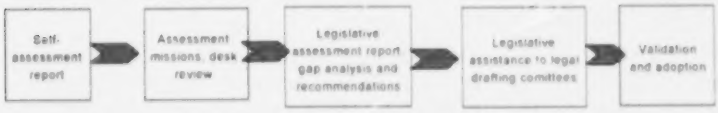
4. Legislative assistance

25. Supporting the enhancement of national legal frameworks on firearms is a long-term engagement strategy aimed at introducing long-lasting and sustainable changes in the beneficiary countries, and is at the core of the Office's mandate in relation to firearms.

26. The methodology of the Global Programme on Firearms for supporting legislative reform efforts provides for a flexible and progressively engaging and participatory process that involves diverse national and regional stakeholders. The process starts with a legislative assessment that includes, where possible, a national self-assessment report and then builds on the findings of country visits, interviews and desk reviews and analyses conducted by UNODC experts, resulting in tailor-made support, where needed.

27. Legislative assessment reports developed by UNODC legal experts provide in-depth analyses of gaps as well as concrete recommendations for improvement. The Global Programme works with national drafting committees with a broad multidisciplinary composition to develop new laws; specialized reference material and guidance tools such as issue papers, model legislation, legislative guides, standardized templates and assessment tools further support such efforts. The Global Programme also actively supports regional harmonization efforts and synergies among different instruments.

Figure IV
The legislative development process of the Global Programme on Firearms


Self-assessment report
Assessment missions, desk review
Legislative assessment report, gap analysis and recommendations
Legislative assistance to legal drafting comittees
Validation and adoption

28. In line with recommendations 6 and 18 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC continued to provide Member States with tailor-made, specialized legislative assistance to help develop effective national legislation in line with the Firearms Protocol, taking into account synergies with other international, regional and subregional instruments. During the reporting period, the Global Programme on Firearms continued to assist and advise Burkina Faso and Chad in revising and amending national firearms legislation by convening legal drafting workshops, undertaking legislative gap analyses and facilitating the preparation of draft bills on firearms. UNODC organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, a follow-up legislative drafting workshop in Ouagadougou from 28 to 30 March 2017. During the workshop, national authorities revised and validated the previous draft legislation that had been jointly developed with the Global Programme. In December 2017, authorities in Burkina Faso shared their new draft with UNODC for final comments, in view of its official submission to the Parliament of Burkina Faso in spring 2018. Another workshop was held in N'Djamena from 7 to 9 November 2017 that was also aimed at concluding the review and drafting work initiated in the previous year with national authorities.

29. As part of the European Union action plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in a series of high-level policy dialogue meetings between the European Union Commission and third countries from the Middle East and North Africa Region (in Tunisia in July 2017 and in Jordan and Lebanon in December 2017). The meetings held in Tunisia and Lebanon focused on legislation related to firearms control and possession. UNODC experts participated together with representatives from the European Union Commission, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

30. UNODC organized a regional legislative harmonization workshop on the transposition of the Firearms Protocol, held in Tunis from 11 to 13 July 2017. The meeting was attended by 20 officials from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, as well

as by national experts from the Netherlands and Spain. Prior to the workshop, an assessment and comparative analysis of firearms legislation in the subregion was prepared by UNODC and presented to participants.

31. UNODC also provided tailored legislative advice to national authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia on the implementation of the import marking requirements under the Firearms Protocol. As a result, both countries integrated the requirements in their draft bills on firearms, which were to be presented to their respective parliaments in 2018.

32. In addition, UNODC supported authorities of Mauritania in translating its new draft law on firearms, which had been previously developed with the support of UNODC, from French to Arabic.

Priority areas for further action

33. Supporting legislative review and reform processes constitutes the first pillar of the Global Programme's integrated approach and will continue to be a core activity of the Programme. UNODC also intends to strengthen its efforts to advocate for the adoption of draft legislation of firearms in countries where such draft legislation is already available.

B. Development of tools

34. UNODC has continued to update and develop specialized tools and publications aimed at providing practical guidance and support and delivering high-quality technical assistance to Member States.

35. Several legislative tools developed by the Global Programme on Firearms in previous years continue to be relevant and useful for practitioners and are being used in the delivery of legislative and technical assistance. By way of example, in 2017, the UNODC Model Law on Firearms, developed in 2010 and updated in 2013, was downloaded almost 4,000 times from the UNODC website. During the same period, the Digest of Organized Crime Cases, developed in 2012 by the Global Programme, was downloaded more than 23,700 times.

36. As part of its legislative assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the Global Programme on Firearms conducted a comparative study on the implementation of import marking requirements for firearms and ammunition and their transposition into national legislation in European and Balkan countries. The findings of this study were translated into local languages and shared with national authorities, and will be published and disseminated as an issue paper in the coming months.

37. The Comprehensive Firearms Training Curriculum continues to be used for capacity-building activities and is being regularly reviewed and updated. The curriculum currently comprises 19 modules containing practical information on the implementation of national controls to prevent and combat trafficking in firearms, the identification of trafficking in firearms, as well as operational practices on how to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms. In 2017, parts of the curriculum were translated into French and disseminated at training activities. A new module on detection of firearms at land border crossings was developed and piloted-tested, and additional modules on gender mainstreaming and other cross-cutting themes are in the process of being developed.

38. In the context of the UNODC Education for Justice initiative, the Global Programme on Firearms initiated the development of teaching modules to encourage and guide tertiary-level educators in addressing the topic of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and related topics. It is planned that the modules will be validated by educators and thematic experts in three regional meetings, to be held in Asia, Latin America and Vienna (for Africa, Europe and the Russian Federation) between April and May 2018, and pilot-tested and disseminated in the course of 2018.

39. In line with recommendation 21 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC initiated the collection and analysis of relevant cases and good practices to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms, including cases linked to terrorism and organized crime. Several cases are collected in the course of regional meetings and training activities, thus allowing for a direct exchange with practitioners on lessons learned and setbacks encountered in the conduct of the respective investigations. It is foreseen that the collected information will be published in a digest of illicit firearms cases, which will compile and analyse practical experiences, including concrete legal techniques, common protocols and operational norms in combating those crimes, as well as new and emerging forms of criminality.

40. UNODC also collaborated with RAND Europe on their empirical research on trafficking in firearms via the darknet, drafting an annex chapter to the RAND Europe study on the international legal framework and its ability to respond to this threat. The study and the annex chapter were published in July 2017 and can be downloaded from the UNODC website.[4]

41. Pursuant to its mandate to continue its efforts to improve the methodology of the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, in accordance with Conference resolution 8/3, UNODC has reviewed its data collection methodology and updated its questionnaire on illicit trafficking in firearms in consultation and collaboration with Member States as well as weapons and statistical experts (further information on the Firearms Study is contained in section F below).

Priority areas for further action

42. UNODC is seeking funds to continue its effort to collect cases and good practices in investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in firearms and to publish them in a digest of illicit firearms cases. UNODC is also seeking funds for the development of technical tools and a series of issue papers to address legislative and operational responses to new and emerging threats linked to firearms, such as trafficking via the darknet, 3-D printing, deactivation standards, synergies between legislative frameworks on trafficking in firearms and other serious crimes, and to translate and disseminate relevant tools into all six official United Nations languages.

C. Technical support and capacity-building for implementation of preventive control measures under the Protocol

43. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to provide technical support to Member States in the implementation of preventive and security measures under the Firearms Protocol, in particular for marking and record-keeping, the storage of seized and confiscated firearms and ammunition, as well as the collection and disposal of illicit firearms.

1. Marking and record-keeping of firearms

44. In line with recommendation 10 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC has continued to provide technical assistance in the area of marking and record-keeping through technical support and specialized capacity-building efforts.

45. In the Western Balkans, UNODC organized workshops in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1 December 2017) and Serbia (14 December 2017) to support those countries' respective national processes of developing and implementing operating procedures for marking imported firearms. During the workshops, UNODC shared and discussed the findings of the comparative study on the implementation of import marking requirements for firearms and ammunition described above. Prior to those

[4] The study and the UNODC annex chapter are available on the UNODC firearms web page (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/news/unodc-analyses-the-policy-implications-of-illicit-firearms-trafficking-on-the-dark-web.html).

workshops, in October 2017, UNODC organized a study visit to Vienna for both countries, during which the delegations visited the Vienna proof house and received information and practical demonstrations on the exercise of marking and the organization of the marking process, including the responsibilities of the parties involved, cooperation with industry and the resources and organizational structures required to implement the marking of firearms, among others.

46. In West Africa and the Sahel region, UNODC continued providing support to national authorities in the field of marking and registration of weapons, with a view to developing sustainable and stable structures to ensure continued efforts in marking and record-keeping. By the end of 2017, more than 48,000 firearms had been marked in Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and the Niger. Periodic refresher training courses and technical follow-up support is still required in order to ensure full national ownership and sustained efforts. To that end, UNODC continued to work closely with the Government of Mali to support the registration in central databases of more than 33,000 firearms in 2017. In December 2017, UNODC organized a refresher capacity-building session on the use of registries in Mali.

47. The Global Programme on Firearms continued to work with the Information and Technology Service of UNODC on the development of a comprehensive record-keeping system on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. The development of such a registry is a response to requests made by several countries that lack comprehensive and digitalized record-keeping systems, or that require additional support for the recording of seized, found and surrendered firearms. On the basis of a technical concept note developed by the Global Programme, the UNODC Information and Technology Service is to design and develop the software, which is to be operationalized first in Panama as part of that country's national project on firearms, which started in June 2017; subject to additional funding, it is then to be provided to other requesting countries and customized to their specific needs.

Priority areas for further action

48. Support for marking and record-keeping of firearms will remain a priority for most countries, requiring technical and financial support, equipment and training on the marking and recording of firearms, including those that are seized, collected and recovered. The development of a comprehensive record-keeping system and its customization, adaptation and implementation in other interested countries remains a high priority and will require additional funding. UNODC is also working towards ensuring that marking and registration exercises are implemented in parallel with the operationalization of tracing mechanisms.

2. Physical security and stockpile management

49. The proper storage and management of firearms poses a particular challenge for many countries that face thefts and leakages from their storage facilities, as well as in relation to securing the chain of custody that is required to produce valid evidence in court. Effective and secure management and storage of seized firearms is a major priority for many countries, and goes hand in hand with effective and comprehensive record-keeping systems.

50. UNODC has continued to support selected countries in enhancing the security of storage facilities for seized firearms in order to ensure good practices in physical security and stockpile management. In that regard, work on the construction and refurbishment of transitional firearms storage sites for seized firearms was completed in Senegal, and continues in Burkina Faso and the Niger.

Priority areas for further action

51. Support provided by the Global Programme on Firearms in relation to the physical security of stocks will continue to focus primarily on seized and/or confiscated firearms.

3. Collection, management and disposal of firearms

52. Arms collection campaigns form a part of national efforts to reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of firearms and reduce the risk of their theft and diversion into illicit markets.

53. During the reporting period, UNODC worked closely with national authorities and civil society organizations from Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal in the development of awareness-raising and campaigns to collect illicit firearms, with gender-sensitive messages tailored to specific population groups, such as young men, women and youth. Voluntary arms-surrender campaigns were launched in all three Member States between February and March 2018. Follow-up support will focus on the identification, recording and destruction of illicit firearms as well as on the procurement of relevant equipment and training on its use.

54. In Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Panama, part of the integrated assistance package agreed with the respective Governments includes the record-keeping system, as well as the design, development and implementation of a national arms surrender campaign and a simultaneous arms registration campaign, with related capacity-building, awareness-raising and technical support, to be rolled out in the course of 2018.

Priority areas for further action

55. Several Member States face the challenge of diversion of weapons from national stocks and armouries. Supporting Member States in ensuring the availability of adequate equipment, as well as training on stockpile management and the destruction of illicit firearms in line with international standards and good practices remains a priority of UNODC.

D. Strengthening criminal justice responses to firearms-related criminality

56. Strengthening criminal justice responses to trafficking in firearms and its links to organized crime and other crimes, including terrorist activities, constitutes one of the five pillars of the Office's work on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. Detecting illicit trafficking movements, dismantling the criminal networks or groups involved in trafficking in firearms or other serious crimes, and bringing the perpetrators to justice are essential preconditions for reducing illicit arms flows and combating all forms of organized crime, as expressed in target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In practice, however, criminal investigations of firearms trafficking offences are rare and difficult to carry out.

57. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to deliver specialized training and capacity-building courses on the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in firearms and its links to organized crime and related matters. From 27 to 31 March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms delivered a course to 33 practitioners from the areas of law enforcement, prosecution and customs and from the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Burkina Faso. Another course was delivered in Algiers from 27 to 30 November 2017 for more than 60 officials from Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. The training sessions were tailored to meet national needs and addressed, inter alia, proactive investigation techniques, intelligence and forensics, and the latest trends in and use of new technologies in firearms manufacturing and trafficking. Participants enriched their skills and knowledge about investigative methods and were able to discuss with practitioners from other Member States practices that are best-suited to a successful criminal justice approach.

58. Representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in a conference organized within the framework of "LE TrainNet" initiative of the UNODC programme Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime and

hosted by the National Commission of Security, the Federal Police (in its capacity as President of the American Police Community) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, held in Mexico City from 30 August to 1 September. The conference brought together 200 law enforcement officers and training experts from more than 40 countries and organizations. The fifth session of the conference was dedicated to training initiatives focused on monitoring, criminalization and investigation of firearms trafficking.

59. UNODC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the World Customs Organization and the United Kingdom Border Force Skills Academy, trained 20 customs officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the detection of trafficking in firearms at land border-crossing points. The training course was held in Sarajevo from 28 to 30 November 2017 and addressed the international and national legal framework on firearms, investigation of trafficking in firearms, procedures for domestic and international tracing, marking and record-keeping, risk assessment, and profiling of vehicles and passengers. A practical exercise on detecting firearms took place at the premises of the national Customs Administration, where the participants used a training vehicle to gain hands-on experience on locating possible concealments of illicit firearms.

60. In addition, UNODC joined INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization in conceptualizing and implementing the different phases of a simultaneous law enforcement operation named TRIGGER III in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Nigeria from 20 November to 1 December 2017, during which 130 firearms, including 49 Kalashnikov-type weapons and several rounds of ammunition, were seized by local authorities. The operation also led to the initiation of 50 tracing requests. This represents an encouraging improvement with respect to previous operations. UNODC placed an emphasis on promoting a coherent criminal justice response and further investigation of identified cases of trafficking in firearms, and supported the participation of prosecutors of the participating Member States in the operation. Prior to the operation, a planning workshop with the organizers and partner countries was held in Algiers in September 2017, and a pre-operation workshop to further define the national operational plans for participating countries was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in October 2017. UNODC is also supporting a similar police operation in Member States of the Middle East and North Africa, for which a first preparatory meeting was held in Casablanca, Morocco, from 12 to 15 February 2018.

61. In the same vein, UNODC participated in and contributed to the Europol Joint Action Day Calibre, a police operation against trafficking in firearms in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The operation resulted in the seizure of 136 firearms, more than 7,000 rounds of ammunition and a wide range of other illicit goods and contraband.

62. In addition, UNODC and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held a training session in Belgrade from 19 to 20 December 2017 on the identification and tracing of firearms and ammunition for 17 police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The objective of the training session was to enhance the knowledge and skills of front-line responders to identify trafficked firearms, collect and record relevant data and successfully participate in international information exchange.

Priority areas for further action

63. Training and capacity-building remain priorities for many requesting countries. UNODC intends to further reinforce this component of the Global Programme on Firearms, including by expanding the scope of specialized training programmes to better respond to such requests. UNODC further plans to continue its support to practical police operations by promoting greater cooperation with the judiciary and

ensuring a coherent criminal justice response to cases of trafficking in firearms. In the same vein, UNODC plans to strengthen its support for the creation and operationalization of specialized firearms hubs within the law enforcement system.

E. Promoting international cooperation and information exchange

64. International cooperation in criminal matters is a fundamental part of the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms, including the regular sharing of information and good practices among practitioners, which is explicitly encouraged by the Protocol in its article 12. In its resolution 8/3, the Conference requested UNODC to continue to promote and encourage international cooperation in criminal matters, pursuant to the Convention, with the aim of investigating and prosecuting the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, including when related to terrorism and to other crimes, through regional and cross-regional workshops, including for countries that are on relevant trafficking routes.

65. Pursuant to this mandate and in line with recommendation 20 emanating from the fifth meeting of the Working Group, the Global Programme on Firearms actively promotes international law enforcement and judicial cooperation, as well as the exchange of information and best practices at the theoretical level through training and capacity-building activities, and at the practical and operational levels through regular meetings and exchanges among practitioners and by supporting international and regional police forces.

66. UNODC has promoted the creation of an informal group of firearms control and criminal justice practitioners, referred to as the "Community of Practitioners". The initiative is aimed at promoting better interactions among the different communities and fostering regional and interregional cooperation to counter trafficking in firearms and its links to other forms of organized crime and serious crimes, including terrorism, through the regular exchange of information, case-based experiences and good practices among criminal justice, law enforcement and firearms control practitioners. Meetings of the Community of Practitioners were held in Algiers from 5 to 7 December 2017, and in Belgrade on 12 and 13 December 2017, with more than 60 participants from Algeria, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania and the Niger, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The meetings also complement the development of the digest of illicit firearms cases.

Priority areas for further action

67. UNODC will continue to promote and establish the Community of Practitioners to support international cooperation efforts and encourage the regular exchange of good practices and lessons learned in the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms and its links to other forms of organized crime and serious crimes.

F. Mapping and monitoring illicit firearms flows

68. The fifth pillar of the approach of the Global Programme on Firearms focuses on evidence-based research and analysis, and aims at enhancing the intelligence picture and the overall understanding of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context.

69. UNODC began updating the methodology used for the Firearms Study in 2016, pursuant to the mandate contained in Conference resolution 8/3, to continue to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative information and suitably disaggregated data on trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, taking into account the 2015 Firearms Study and target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to disseminate its findings on a regular basis, and to that end, to revise and enhance its methodology in cooperation with relevant organizations. Target 16.4 has served to highlight the relevance of the UNODC Firearms Study and contributed to shaping the Office's mandate to continue to collect and analyse data on firearms. The proposed

indicator for this target (16.4.2, the proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms, whose illicit origin/context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments) is complementary to the Study, and further supports the Office's work; UNODC and the Office for Disarmament Affairs were designated as co-custodians of indicator 16.4.2.

70. Following an informal expert group meeting in September 2016 and a round of informal consultations with selected firearms and statistical experts in March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms, in cooperation with the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, launched a pilot test exercise of the revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. To ensure a geographical balance and take into account the complexity and structure of the existing national data collection systems, 39 Member States and one intergovernmental organization were invited to participate in the exercise. A total of 12 responses were received,[5] containing data and metadata, as well as feedback on the feasibility and comprehensibility of the revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. Additionally, feedback received during three regional meetings on firearms data collection and analysis was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. It is estimated that the official data collection exercise will be launched in April 2018.

71. The revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire contains quantitative and qualitative questions on the amount, type, condition, geographical and criminal context, tracing, trafficking routes, trends and modalities of seized firearms. The questionnaire also addresses, where necessary, found and surrendered firearms for purposes of reporting progress made against target indicator 16.4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, where deemed useful for the identification and monitoring of illicit arms flows, the questionnaire seeks information on seized parts and components and ammunition.

72. Furthermore, with a view to enhancing national and international data collection and analysis efforts to monitor illicit firearms trafficking flows and to promote more effective international cooperation and information exchange among practitioners, UNODC organized a series of regional meetings, with the participation of 54 Member States. The first, for African Member States,[6] was held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 September 2017; the second, for Latin America,[7] in Panama City on 29 and 30 November 2017; and the third, for European countries,[8] in Brussels on 25 January 2018. In total, more than 120 participants from 26 African, 14 Latin American and 15 European Member States, as well as concerned regional and non-governmental organizations, participated in and contributed to the meetings, providing comments and feedback on the pilot questionnaire and engaging in practical exercises on completing it.

73. The regional meetings benefited from expert interventions from various non-governmental organizations and research and statistical institutes, such as Conflict Armament Research, the Institute for Security Studies and the Small Arms Survey at the regional meeting in Africa, the joint Mexico-UNODC Centre of Excellence for Crime Statistics on Governance, Victims of Crime, Public Security and Justice at the regional meeting in Latin America, and Eurostat and Frontex at the European regional

[5] UNODC received feedback during the pilot test exercise from Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Ghana, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Romania, the United Kingdom, Zambia and the European Union.

[6] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Africa: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

[7] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

[8] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Europe: Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

meeting. At least three more regional meetings are planned for 2018, for Southern and Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and Asia.

IV. Coordination with other relevant international and regional organizations

A. Cooperation within the United Nations

74. UNODC has continued to contribute to the work of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism,[9] the system-wide coordination platform established by the Secretary-General to promote the exchange of information and coordination of ongoing initiatives and to support efforts to "deliver as one" on the issue of small arms. UNODC also continues to coordinate activities and cooperate with relevant United Nations agencies and offices, such as the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), UNDP, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

75. On 17 May 2017, UNODC contributed to an open briefing for Member States on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons, organized by CTED and held in New York, to provide an overview on the various initiatives being undertaken by the United Nations in that regard. Representatives of UNODC presented the Office's integrated approach to tackling existing challenges in preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in firearms, including cases linked to other forms of organized crime and terrorism.

76. Representatives of UNODC actively participated in a seminar for member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Timor-Leste on illicit trafficking in and diversion of small arms and light weapons organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, held in Phnom Penh on 19 and 20 December 2017. UNODC representatives presented the Office's data collection initiative for monitoring and measuring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also provided information on the Office's work in support of Member States' efforts to counter illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking.

77. In addition, UNODC contributed to a training session on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for 50 young female professionals and held in Vienna from 12 to 16 February 2018, and elaborated on the Office's approach to countering trafficking in firearms and its links to the Sustainable Development Goals.

B. Cooperation with other international and regional organizations

78. In order to enhance understanding of the Firearms Protocol and its links to other instruments, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty, UNODC participated in a high-level panel discussion organized by the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in Vienna, entitled "Contributions to controlling transfers of conventional arms".

79. On 4 October 2017, UNODC took part in the second meeting of the African Union-Germany Coordination Platform, held in Addis Ababa, which brought together representatives of the African Union, African subregional organizations, United Nations agencies and other implementing agencies. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the African Union initiative on silencing the guns — continental plan of action

[9] The United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism comprises 23 United Nations entities that coordinate and cooperate within the framework of their respective mandates.

on the control of illicit small arms and light weapons. UNODC provided substantive advice on activities that could be carried out in support of the plan and to which it could contribute, particularly in relation to the need to strengthen the criminal justice response as a means to improve the fight against trafficking in illicit firearms.

80. Representatives of UNODC provided the Office's perspective on the state of research on illicit arms flows in Africa during a meeting organized for the African Regional Economic Communities by the African Union and the non-governmental organization Small Arms Survey, held in Addis Ababa on 13 and 14 June 2017.

81. UNODC has maintained regular contact with the European Union to address the need to strengthen legislative frameworks on firearms, enhance national and international data collection and analysis of illicit trafficking flows, and reinforce the criminal justice response to detect and prosecute trafficking in illicit firearms and its links to organized crime and terrorism. In that regard, UNODC contributed to the aforementioned legislative workshops organized by the European Union and held in Jordan (November 2017) and Lebanon (December 2017), and supported a training session organized by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training held in Czechia (September 2017), among other activities. Moreover, operational cooperation activities with Europol, the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats and INTERPOL have continued and intensified, and will be further expanded in 2018.

82. Additionally, UNODC ensured cooperation with other regional organizations mandated to work on firearms issues, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, representatives of which participated in the regional meeting on data collection for Africa, and the Arab Maghreb Union, representatives of which participated in a regional legislative workshop for Maghreb countries and Libya.

C. Cooperation with civil society and the private sector

83. Participation and cooperation with civil society is a cross-cutting element of the Global Programme on Firearms. UNODC has actively engaged civil society organizations at various levels, including by supporting the development of legislation, providing training activities, developing a training course on civil society participation and oversight, and collaborating in the implementation of advocacy materials.

84. In the context of the Education for Justice initiative, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms once again took active part in The Hague International Model United Nations, organized by the Qatar Foundation and held in Doha on 25 January 2018. With the goal of sensitizing young students to the issue of trafficking in firearms and the international response to the threat posed by it, the representatives of the Global Programme introduced the Office's approach to countering trafficking in firearms and the links to target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The conference brought together more than 1,300 students from across the globe.

85. UNODC participated in and contributed to meetings and seminars organized by, inter alia, the Centre for the Reduction of Firearms Crime, Trafficking and Terrorism of the University of Northampton, United Kingdom (February 2018), the Observatory on Organized Crime of the University of Milan (February 2018), and in several meetings organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as part of its projects funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, held respectively in Panama City (May 2017), Dakar (June 2017) and Johannesburg, South Africa (February 2018).

86. UNODC remains engaged with key organizations working on the issue of illicit trafficking in firearms, such as Conflict Armament Research, RAND Europe, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Bonn International Center for Conversion, the Institute for Security Studies, the Mines Advisory Group, West African Action Network

on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Small Arms Survey and the Joint Research Centre on Transnational Crime (Transcrime).

Priority areas for further action

87. The Global Programme on Firearms will continue to cooperate with and involve civil society organizations and the private sector in its activities, both in the implementation of awareness-raising activities and in addressing cross-cutting themes, in particular those related to gender and human rights.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

88. The illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, and their links to organized crime, terrorism and other serious crimes, remains a pressing problem in many countries and regions.

89. The Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol establish a robust legal framework at the international level to combat and address the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. This framework is further reinforced through other legal instruments and policy frameworks adopted at the global and regional levels.

90. The Global Programme on Firearms has continued to promote the ratification of the Firearms Protocol and to assist Member States in its implementation, building on five major pillars. Sustainable and predictable funds are required to ensure the continuation of the Global Programme's activities and to enable it to respond to technical assistance requests from different countries and regions.

91. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and monitoring progress made towards their achievement are two equally important objectives. The UNODC mapping and monitoring initiative is a suitable tool to facilitate the global monitoring of indicator 16.4.2 of the Goals.

92. The Working Group may wish to discuss the effectiveness and sustainability of implemented control measures that contribute to the fight against trafficking in illicit firearms and related offences, including terrorism. The Working Group may further wish to discuss the linkages between the different kinds of measures that contribute to achieving target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the structure and effectiveness of existing national mechanisms and authorities that monitor progress towards the reduction of trafficking in illicit firearms. In addition, the Working Group may wish to discuss how practical measures under the Firearms Protocol can help prevent criminal and terrorists groups from acquiring firearms, also taking into account developments in other international forums, such as Security Council resolution 2370 (2017), on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons.

United Nations CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/4

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: General
14 May 2018

Original: English

Report on the meeting of the Working Group on Firearms held in Vienna on 2 and 3 May 2018

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 5/4, entitled "Illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition", the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime decided to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group on firearms, in accordance with article 32, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and rule 2, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure for the Conference, to be chaired by a member of the Bureau of the Conference, to advise and assist the Conference in the implementation of its mandate with regard to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

2. In that resolution, the Conference also decided that the working group should perform the following functions: (a) facilitate implementation of the Firearms Protocol through the exchange of experience and practices among experts and practitioners; (b) make recommendations to the Conference on how States parties could better implement the provisions of the Firearms Protocol; (c) assist the Conference in providing guidance to its secretariat on the activities of the secretariat and on the development of technical assistance tools relating to the implementation of the Firearms Protocol; and (d) make recommendations to the Conference on how the working group could better coordinate with the various international bodies combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, in the area of supporting and promoting implementation of the Firearms Protocol.

3. In its resolution 7/1, entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto", the Conference decided that the Working Group on Firearms would be a constant element of the Conference of the Parties, forwarding its reports and recommendations to the Conference, and encouraged the Working Group to consider meeting on an annual basis, as needed.

4. In its resolution 8/3, entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", the Conference acknowledged that the Working Group on Firearms serves as a useful network of experts and competent authorities in

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order to improve international cooperation, exchange of information and good practices related to illicit firearms trafficking.

II. Recommendations

5. At its meeting held in Vienna on 2 and 3 May 2018, the Working Group on Firearms adopted the recommendations presented below for consideration by the Conference.

A. General recommendations

Recommendation 1

Acknowledging that trafficking in firearms is a transnational threat that is often linked to organized crime, including drug trafficking and terrorism, and that the availability and accessibility of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition to organized criminal groups increases the destructive power of such groups and provides them with the material and financial means to pursue their goals and perpetuate their existence, Member States should take all appropriate action to prevent such groups from acquiring those items.

Recommendation 2

Acknowledging that illicit firearms trafficking facilitates organized crime and the commission of terrorist acts and undermines the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States should consider developing integrated and holistic approaches and national strategies or action plans to prevent and counter illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, in particular in the context of transnational organized crime and terrorism.

Recommendation 3

Recognizing that the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Firearms Protocol provides a meaningful basis for preventing and combating the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, and its links to organized crime and terrorism, the Conference may wish to call upon all Member States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Firearms Protocol and to fully implement its provisions.

Recommendation 4

The Conference may wish to request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to continue to assist Member States in addressing the threats posed by illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and its links to other serious crimes, and in preventing organized crime and terrorist groups from acquiring firearms, and to that end, to call upon Member States to provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to support developing countries.

B. Recommendations on specific topics

1. Recommendations on legislative measures

Recommendation 5

Member States should enhance, where necessary, their national legal and institutional frameworks to address the interconnected challenges posed by illicit trafficking in firearms and other crimes such as organized crime and terrorism, and to request UNODC to provide assistance to requesting States in that regard.

Recommendation 6

Member States should revise and strengthen their national firearms legislation in order to identify legislative gaps and potential loopholes that could facilitate the access of criminal or terrorist groups to firearms and their diversion into the illegal market, taking into account emerging threats and technological developments, by reinforcing, inter alia, their provisions on manufacturing, deactivation and conversion, and strengthening national transfer and licensing controls.

2. Recommendations on preventive, security and regulatory measures

Recommendation 7

The Conference may wish to consider requesting the Working Group to address the topic of practical measures aimed at enhancing the control and traceability of firearms and implementing innovative technological solutions in order to overcome the challenges posed by the frequent obliteration and erasing of markings on firearms used by criminal and terrorist groups, such as, inter alia, by introducing radio frequency identification microchips into weapons during their assembly process.

Recommendation 8

Taking into account that comprehensive records and adequate marking are pre-requisites for effective tracing, Member States should consider the importance of maintaining records on firearms for as long as possible and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement officers to efficiently use the available databases with a view to investigating concrete criminal cases involving illicit firearms and trafficking in firearms.

3. Recommendations on law enforcement and criminal justice

Recommendation 9

Member States are invited to consider establishing multidisciplinary pools of prosecutors in charge of cases involving organized crime, terrorism and trafficking in firearms, in order to better address those interconnected threats.

Recommendation 10

Member States should provide adequate capacity-building and training for law enforcement and judicial officials, including prosecutors and judges, in order to deal with complex crimes involving multiple offences, including illicit trafficking in firearms, and UNODC should support requesting Member States in that endeavour.

Recommendation 11

States parties should be urged to undertake efforts to reinforce their border control cooperation, and to strengthen the capacities of police and customs officials in identifying firearms and their parts and components and detecting trafficking through tailored risk assessments and profiling techniques, specialized equipment and enhanced capacity-building. To that end, UNODC should support requesting Member States in such efforts, through, inter alia, the provision of specialized training and adequate tools and equipment, and the exchange of good practices.

Recommendation 12

Member States should consider strengthening their early-detection capacities to prevent the diversion of and illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, for example by using state-of-the-art technological tools for the monitoring and inspection of border controls on land, at sea and in the air, and through specialized training for law enforcement, customs and judicial authorities, importers and exporters and other relevant actors.

Recommendation 13

With a view to ensuring that criminal organizations responsible for trafficking in firearms are identified and their leaders are brought to justice, States parties should consider sharing information on seized firearms that have been illicitly trafficked into their territory, and ensure that further investigations are initiated, in follow-up to tracing requests, in the country where the last legal record of the firearms was identified.

4. Recommendations on international cooperation and information exchange

Recommendation 14

Member States should further strengthen their law enforcement and judicial cooperation in cases involving illicit trafficking in firearms, for the purpose of gathering and exchanging information and evidence that can support criminal investigations in court.

Recommendation 15

States parties are encouraged to cooperate more closely with each other and to consider establishing joint investigative teams to conduct international investigations in order to counter the transnational phenomenon of trafficking in firearms, including when such trafficking is linked to other forms of organized crime and terrorism.

Recommendation 16

The Conference may wish to consider requesting the Working Group to address the topic of exchange of information on trends and policies with respect to the craft production of firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

Recommendation 17

The Conference may wish to consider requesting the Working Group to address the topic of trends identified and efforts undertaken with regard to the detection and dismantling of trafficking crimes perpetrated by means of the darknet and cryptocurrencies, in order to reduce illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

Recommendation 18

States parties that have not yet done so should consider establishing a national focal point within their existing legislation and within a competent national authority, in charge of conducting and coordinating relevant actions and initiatives related to firearms control, such as marking, tracing, record-keeping, the collection and sharing of data and supporting or conducting investigations in cases involving illicit firearms, and to facilitate cooperation and information exchange with other countries and relevant organizations, and where applicable, to act as a liaison for the implementation of the Firearms Protocol.

Recommendation 19

Underlining the importance of tracing as an essential measure in identifying illicit firearms flows, Member States are invited to consider establishing national tracing and ballistic centres in support of systematic and centralized data collection and analysis for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive intelligence picture.

Recommendation 20

Member States are encouraged to periodically exchange information at the regional and subregional levels on emerging threats related to illicit trafficking in firearms with a view to detecting and identifying those threats at an early stage and raising the

awareness of other countries that might, owing to their geographic proximity, face similar issues.

Recommendation 21

The Conference may wish to request UNODC to continue to play a leading role in facilitating and encouraging the regular sharing of data, information and experiences among Member States, in accordance with the relevant recommendations adopted at the previous meetings of the Working Group.

Recommendation 22

Member States are encouraged to consider concluding, where appropriate, memorandums of understanding with strategic partner countries to facilitate operational cooperation and information exchange in the context of preventing and combating trafficking in firearms, including when such trafficking is linked to other forms of organized crime or terrorism.

Recommendation 23

The Conference may wish to acknowledge the importance of promoting cooperation and coordination among secretariats and equivalent governing bodies supporting relevant international and regional instruments and mechanisms, bearing in mind the different parties to those instruments and mechanisms and their alignment with target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in that regard, to request the Working Group to continue to promote such cooperation and coordination.

5. Recommendations on monitoring illicit arms flows

Recommendation 24

Acknowledging the importance of enhanced data collection and analysis relating to illicit firearms flows, States parties are encouraged to revise and enhance their national data collection practices and tools, and to participate in and contribute to the upcoming data collection cycle of UNODC, with a view to identifying trends and patterns related to illicit trafficking in firearms, fostering information exchange and enabling the global monitoring of indicator 16.4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Summary of deliberations

6. At its 1st meeting, on 2 May 2018, the Working Group considered agenda item 2, entitled "Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals."

7. The discussion under agenda item 2 was facilitated by Belala Djilali, General Prosecutor of Algeria, on behalf of the Group of African States; Fabio Marini, Principal Administrator in the Directorate-General, Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, on behalf of the European Union; José Romero Morgan, Lieutenant Colonel of the Guardia Civil of Spain, Head of Unit of the Central Division for Firearms and Explosives of the Ministry of Interior of Spain and Driver of the firearms priority area of the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States; and Marcus Vinicius da Silva Dantas, Federal Police Commissioner of Brazil, Division for the Repression of Crimes against Property and Trafficking in Firearms, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

8. The representative of the Group of African States delivered a presentation on his country's experience in responding to the links between trafficking in firearms, organized crime and the commission of terrorism offences. He identified a link

between firearms trafficking and drug trafficking, the proceeds of which provided a source of funding for terrorist groups, and said that the actors of those crimes were being brought to justice. He noted that the adoption of appropriate legislation, including criminal provisions, in accordance with the Firearms Protocol, enhanced border control and judicial cooperation with international and regional organizations and with neighbouring countries. He also called for enhanced international cooperation and encouraged other States to adopt adequate legislation in order to implement the provisions of the Firearms Protocol.

9. The representative of the European Union described the actions undertaken by the European Union to address the links between illicit trafficking in firearms and other crimes, and referred in particular to three fundamental elements related to its implementation of the Firearms Protocol. First, he mentioned the revision of relevant legislation to more strictly control the marking of weapons and essential components manufactured in the European Union, as well as access to other types of weapons, including appropriate definitions for them, and the introduction of technical standards for the deactivation of weapons. Second, he highlighted the importance of enhanced law enforcement cooperation with European Union member States as well as neighbouring countries and other strategically important countries. Lastly, he emphasized the importance of research into firearms trafficking within the European Union and the exchange of information among European Union member States, for which a better use of existing databases was necessary, and underlined that the European Union had started to enhance those databases together with strategic partners such as UNODC and the Flemish Peace Institute, among others.

10. The representative of the Group of Western European and other States spoke about the efforts to implement the firearms priority area of EMPACT, both in terms of his country's experience in that regard and in the context of the European Union. In that connection, he described the priority areas of the EMPACT platform and its focus, which was to counter the threat of serious and organized crime, and highlighted the importance of coordination among all relevant actors. He discussed the issues that had been identified as priorities for action, such as preventing the diversion of firearms into the black market, cooperation with European Union member States and other countries, in particular those in the Balkans and the Middle East and North Africa, and countering the threat posed by deactivated weapons and the illicit conversion of weapons. Moreover, he provided examples of relevant law enforcement operations and emphasized the importance of collecting and generating data and intelligence. He stressed the importance of establishing national focal points to facilitate and enhance cooperation, and the importance of multidisciplinary interventions, including legislative reviews and research, data collection and analysis, and cooperation at all levels. In the second part of his presentation, he drew attention to the legal firearms control model of Spain and the country's comprehensive efforts to counter illicit trafficking. He briefly explained the model, highlighting the importance of the comprehensive control regimen that is carried out in Spain and the lessons learned in the course of the country's leadership of the firearms priority area of the EMPACT platform.

11. The representative of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States highlighted the interconnectedness of firearms trafficking and organized crime and gave a presentation on the experience of his country in combating firearms trafficking, which included information on regional cooperation and cooperation with relevant countries, stressing the value of international cooperation to identify networks of criminal organizations by opening investigations in the countries maintaining the last legal record of seized firearms. He shared best practices regarding the identification and marking of weapons and ammunition acquired by public law enforcement agencies, the importance of mutual legal assistance for the formal collection of evidence, border inspection and the use of surveillance technology. In addition, underscoring the importance of tracing firearms and analysing the tracing results, he described the creation of the Federal Police National Tracing Centre in Brazil and said that developing new ways of effectively marking firearms remained one of the

main challenges for the firearms industry. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that data and information on seized and surrendered arms is centralized, and of conducting thorough data analysis in support of better understanding the phenomenon and devising tailored investigative and operational responses to the threats of firearms trafficking and organized crime.

12. Following their presentations, the panellists exchanged additional information with the delegates in attendance in response to several questions and comments. Among the main issues raised, was the need for further training and capacity-building for practitioners, experts and authorities in relation to investigation and tracing, and it was noted that UNODC had already been undertaking efforts in that regard, which needed to be further strengthened.

13. The importance of harmonizing legislation regionally, internationally and/or with strategically important countries in order to facilitate and strengthen international judicial cooperation was highlighted. In addition, it was noted that, even where countries did not have the same crime typology in their legislation, other offences and/or the Firearms Protocol could provide the context for carrying out international cooperation. The importance of establishing national focal points and having standardized structures in each country to facilitate such cooperation was also mentioned. Moreover, effective border control was identified as a key measure in preventing and countering illicit trafficking in firearms, in particular outside of official border crossing points.

14. At its 2nd meeting, on 2 May 2018, the Working Group continued its deliberations under agenda item 2. Many speakers emphasized the importance of effective and timely training for law enforcement, customs and border officials on the detection of illicitly trafficked firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. It was stated that training was needed in order to strengthen the capacity of the judiciary to properly prosecute and adjudicate cases of firearms trafficking and related offences. Several speakers mentioned the challenges presented by illicit trafficking along long borders and by sea. Several speakers underlined the importance of cooperating with the private sector to improve the marking of firearms, in particular with regard to information-sharing and the establishment of best practices.

15. Many speakers shared their national experiences in addressing the links between organized crime and terrorism, which in many cases were mutually reinforcing, as terrorist groups increasingly engaged in transnational organized criminal activities in order to finance their terrorist activities, including through illicit trafficking in firearms, drugs and persons. One speaker shared an example of terrorists collaborating with a drug trafficking organization. The need to respond to the challenge posed by the use of the darknet for illicit firearms trafficking was also noted. Many speakers stated that authorities in their countries had seized a large number of explosives in addition to firearms.

16. The Working Group also exchanged information on national efforts to adopt or review legislation to implement the Firearms Protocol and other relevant legal instruments. Several speakers noted that those efforts had been supported by UNODC and other international and regional organizations, and called for enhanced technical assistance, from both intergovernmental organizations and other States. Cooperation within regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Union, the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Organization of American States was mentioned in the context of enhancing international cooperation. Many speakers also shared their experience in enhancing the effectiveness of tracing, including through the continuous exchange of information.

17. At its 3rd meeting, on 3 May 2018, the Working Group considered agenda item 3, entitled "Preparation of the questionnaire to review the implementation of the Firearms Protocol". Several speakers recalled the mandate contained in Conference resolution 8/2 regarding the preparation of the questionnaire, namely, that it should be a short, precise and focused self-assessment tool for practitioners to assess the

implementation of the Firearms Protocol. It was also stated that the language of the questionnaire should be consistent with that contained in the Firearms Protocol, and it was suggested that, in order to streamline the questionnaire, optional provisions, measures and/or questions that went beyond the scope of the questionnaire or that were open-ended could be placed in an optional annex to the questionnaire.

18. The Working Group began carrying out a second detailed reading of the draft questionnaire for the review of the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, as contained in a non-paper (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/CRP.1), but was unable to complete it. Delegates provided specific comments and amendments to the text, which was projected on-screen and edited by a representative of the Secretariat. In concluding the deliberations on agenda item 3, the Chair requested the Secretariat to prepare a new version of the draft questionnaire on the basis of the comments that had been made during the deliberations and that had been recorded in the text, and to circulate that version as a non-paper. The Chair also requested the Secretariat to make available on the website of the Working Group the text as projected on-screen, for information and reference purposes.

19. During the deliberations under agenda item 3, it was recommended that, once the negotiations for the preparation of all four questionnaires, related to the Convention and its three Protocols, had concluded, it would be necessary for either the extended Bureau of the Conference, another expert meeting and/or the Conference to review all the questionnaires again in order to eliminate incongruities and duplications among the texts. Such a review could also address the outstanding issue of whether to include questions on the provisions that related to the mutatis mutandis application of the Convention in each of the Protocol questionnaires or only in the Convention questionnaire.

IV. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening of the meeting

20. The sixth meeting of the Working Group on Firearms was held in Vienna on 2 and 3 May 2018.

21. The meeting was opened by Guillermo Fonseca Leal (Mexico), Chair of the Working Group. He addressed the meeting and presented an overview of the mandate of the Working Group, its objectives and the subjects under its consideration.

22. At the opening of the meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the European Union on behalf of the States members of the European Union.

B. Statements

23. Under agenda item 2, statements were made by representatives of the following parties to the Firearms Protocol: Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, the European Union, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru and Turkey. Statements were also made by the representatives of China, a signatory State, and by the observers for the non-signatory States Chad, France, Indonesia, the Niger and the United States of America.

24. With the Chair presiding, the discussion under item 2 was led by the following panellists: Belala Djilali (Algeria), Fabio Marini (European Union), José Romero Morgan (Spain) and Marcus Vinicius da Silva Dantas (Brazil).

25. Under agenda item 3, statements were made by representatives of the following parties to the Firearms Protocol: Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Cuba, the European Union, Italy, Mexico, Peru, Romania and Switzerland. Statements

were also made by the signatory States Canada and China, and by the observers for the non-signatory States France, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the United States.

C. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

26. At its 1st meeting, on 2 May 2018, the Working Group adopted by consensus the following agenda, as orally amended:

1. Organizational matters:
   (a) Opening of the meeting;
   (b) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
2. Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. Preparation of the questionnaire to review the implementation of the Firearms Protocol.
4. Other matters.
5. Adoption of the report.

D. Attendance

27. The following parties to the Firearms Protocol were represented at the meeting: Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, European Union, Ghana, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

28. The following States signatories to the Firearms Protocol were represented by observers: Canada, China, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

29. The following States that are not parties or signatories to the Firearms Protocol were represented by observers: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chad, Colombia, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malta, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, United Arab Emirates and United States.

30. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers: Commonwealth of Independent States, European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), Gulf Cooperation Council, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Police Community of the Americas (Ameripol), RACVIAC — Centre for Security Cooperation, Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and World Customs Organization.

31. A list of participants is contained in document CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/INF/1/Rev.1.

E. Documentation

32. The Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Annotated provisional agenda (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/1);

(b) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/2);

(c) Background paper prepared by the Secretariat on activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote ratification and implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3);

(d) Non-paper containing a draft questionnaire for the review of the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, in accordance with resolution 8/2 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/CRP.1);

(e) Note by the Secretariat containing a questionnaire on illicit arms flows (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/CRP.2).

V. Adoption of the report

33. On 3 May 2018, the Working Group adopted the present report on its meeting.